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ABSTRACT

Architecture is an art form and a guide to the study of history. By increasing visual awareness of the architectural environment more is learned about the history and cultural heritage of an area, region, or country. In addition, an appreciation for fine craftsmanship, good design, and their influences on individual lives is developed. The article describes some basic steps for becoming a "building watcher" and provides explanations of architectural styles and language for the novice building watcher. Included are pictorial descriptions of buildings found in Indiana which are based on architectural styles dating from the early 1800s to the mid 1900s, elements to look for in buildings, and a list of terms to know. (KWL)

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Be a Building Watcher

On the Street Where You Live

Many people don't think of the houses they live in as architecture; they apply that term only to major public buildings, churches, and the like. But all buildings and other man-made structures are examples of architecture; we're surrounded. In addition to its practical value in providing shelter for home and workplace, architecture is an artform and a guide to the study of history.

It stands to reason that this pervasive contribution to our lives merits our attention, exploration and interpretation. Increasing our visual awareness of the built environment has many benefits. We learn more about history and our heritage. We develop an appreciation for fine craftsmanship and good design and their influences on our lives. This understanding leads us to become more discriminating advocates for positive change in our neighborhoods and communities.

Becoming a building watcher is easy. All it takes is curiosity and practice. Learning about architectural styles is one way to get started. Indiana's architecture does not differ to a great extent from that of other states, so if we learn the basic styles, we can be building watchers practically anywhere.

Don't be discouraged if many buildings do not seem to fall into a specific design classification. Some buildings exhibit elements of several styles; others may have been altered in ways that obscure the original style. Still other buildings, known as vernacular structures, were built for utility. Builders of vernacular structures usually worked with little awareness of style. A building that does not exactly fit the description of any architectural style may still be a significant and important structure to a town or neighborhood.

Often no two architectural historians agree on stylistic classifications. We have taken the liberty of streamlining — perhaps even oversimplifying — explanations of architectural styles and language for the benefit of novice building watchers. Names and terms can be helpful to the beginner, but looking and paying attention to details are the most important attributes of a successful building watcher. A building displays many visual clues that tell us about its age, design, original use, and even its future.

While we look at individual structures, we should also notice their context and pick up clues about the relationship of the building to the street, the neighborhood, and the town. In studying the streetscape, there are many elements to consider. Here are just a few:

Building-to-building relationships: Notice the general scale of buildings, their comparative height, set back from the street, and the spacing between them. Study the size and spacing of windows and doors, the shapes of roofs. Try to identify building materials and the textures they create. Notice the colors used, and the different types of ornamentation.

Focal points: Certain structures may be of central importance to a town or street because of their setting, monumentality, or for other reasons. Try to identify such structures and consider how different your town or neighborhood would be without them.

Landscaping and street furniture: What are the streets and sidewalks made of? Are the streets tree-lined, or were they at one time? Are the streetlights old or new, and do they enhance or detract from the appearance of the street?

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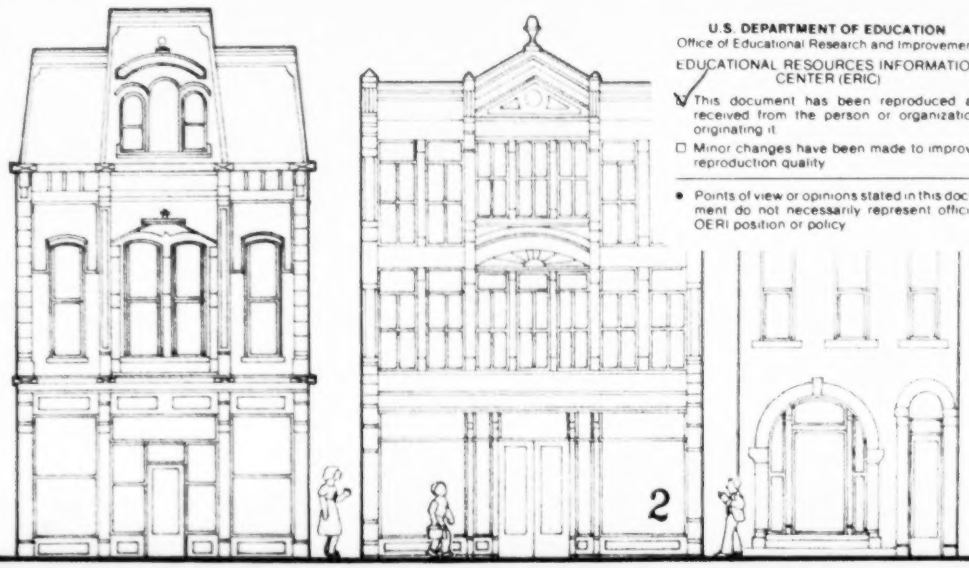

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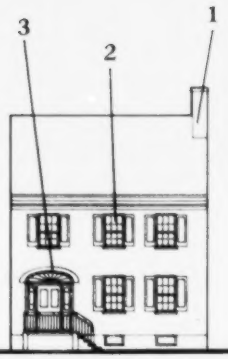
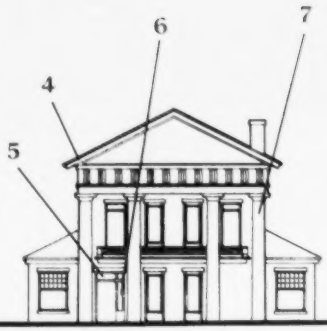
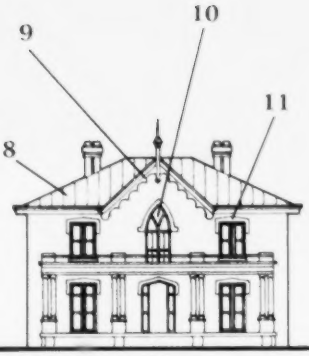


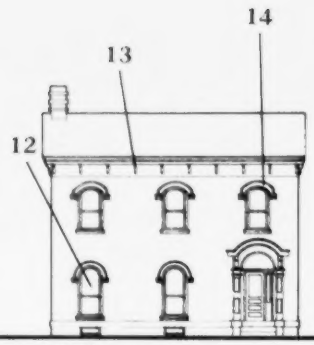
Federal
Madison



Greek Revival
Goshen



Gothic Revival
Williamsport



Italianate
Lawrenceburg

Architectural Styles

Federal (1810–1845)
Flat, undecorated wall surfaces of local materials, usually brick or wood weatherboard. Low-pitched gabled roof. End chimneys. Large multi-paned windows. Fanlight and narrow sidelights at entrance. Most common along early transportation routes such as old National Road and navigable waterways.

Greek Revival (1840–1860)
Inspired by classical Greek temple forms, with heavy cornice and Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian columns and pilasters. Customarily of smooth-faced stone, brick or wood. Sidelights and transom at entrance. Style was popular for courthouses, churches and public buildings.

Gothic Revival (1860–1880)
Emphasis on verticality, typified by steeply pitched roof, pointed arches, vertical board and batten siding. Straight-headed and hooded openings. Bargeboard trim at gable. Later examples distinguished by materials of contrasting color and texture used to enrich wall surfaces.

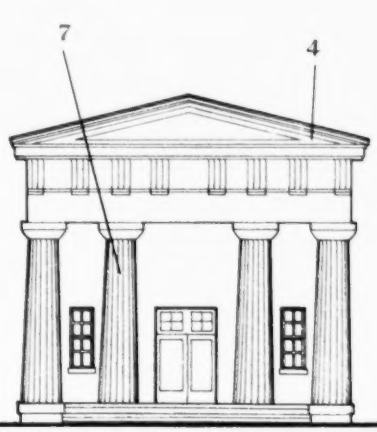
Italianate (1875–1890)
Predominate style in Indiana during the late nineteenth century, derived from Italian villas. Vertical composition. Tall, narrow, slightly arched windows with segmental or round-arched hoods. Low-pitched hipped roof supported by decorative brackets and often topped with a cupola.

Second Empire (1860–1885)
Blend of Renaissance Revival and Italianate styles popularized in Paris during reign of Napoleon III. Typified by Mansard roof, usually slate, with elaborate brackets and projecting dormers. Polychrome ornamentation. Often features central pavilion or tower.

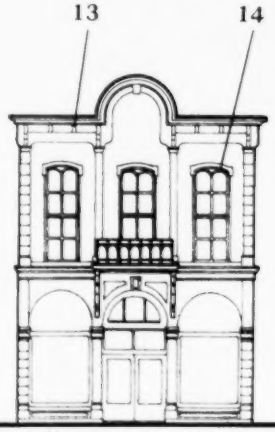
Romanesque Revival (1880–1900)
Adapted from German medieval architecture. Massive scale. Rock-faced stone exterior relieved by trim of contrasting color or texture. Short, grouped columns support thick, round arches. Windows of varied size and shape. Steeply pitched roof. Towers and turrets common. Most often used for large public buildings.

Queen Anne (1885–1905)
Combines medieval and classical elements to create the most exuberant of nineteenth-century styles. Characterized by assymetrical composition, towers, turrets, tall chimneys, bay windows, projecting pavilions, spindled porches and balconies. Contrasting materials on wall surfaces. Stained glass windows.

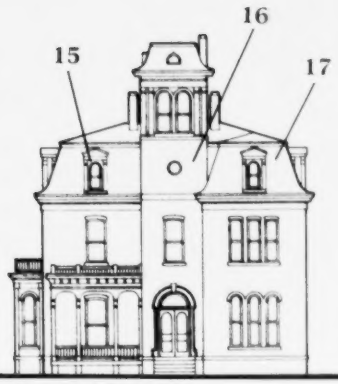
Federal
Centerville



Greek Revival
New Albany

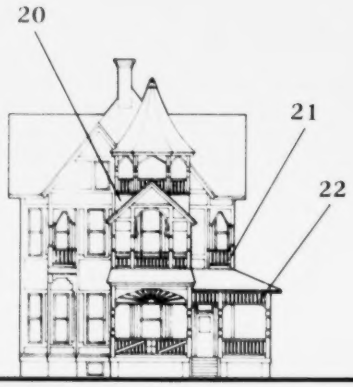


Italianate
Logansport



Second Empire
Indianapolis

Romanesque Revival
South Bend



Queen Anne
Columbus

Carpenter-Builder (1870–1910)
Standardized, one-and-a-half or two-story, astylistic house. Shotgun or ell-shaped structure, commonly frame, with modicum of decorative trim such as gingerbread decoration in gable, spindled friezes and turned posts on porch.

Beaux-Arts Classicism (1895–1915)
Perpetuated by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, this style swept the U.S. after the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago and other early-twentieth century exhibitions. Grandiose form with colossal columns and monumental flights of steps. Windows framed by freestanding columns. Richly ornamented balustrades, pediments, parapets, entablatures. Sculptural figures. Style commonly applied to public buildings and executed in limestone.

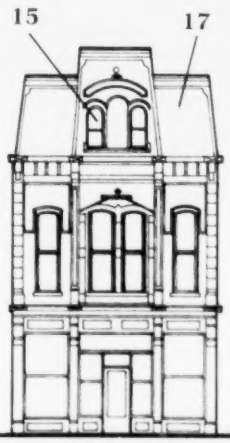
Colonial Revival (1890–1940)
One of many "revival" styles of early twentieth century. Symmetrical massing. Commonly used details include Palladian windows, quoins, garlands, heavy dentils, pedimented dormers, classical columns or pilasters. Multi-paned windows with shutters. Entrance with fanlight and sidelights.

Tudor Revival (1900–1940)
Revival style modeled on English cottages. Light stucco wall surfaces and dark half-timbering. Steeply-pitched slate roof with prominent gables. Leaded-glass windows (often diamond-shaped panes). Tudor-arched entrance. Usually built of brick or stone and stucco.

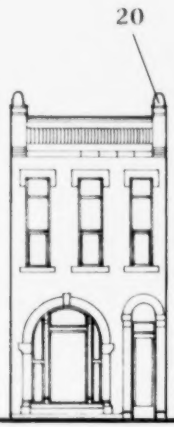
Pairie Style (1900–1920)
Originated by a group of Chicago architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, the style's most famous proponent. Marked by horizontal, ground-hugging quality: low-pitched hipped roof with widely overhanging eaves; horizontal bands of windows. Two-story central portion flanked by low, one-story wings or porches. Usually built of brick or stucco and wood.

Bungalow (1905–1940)
One- or one-and-a-half-story house. Low-pitched roof with wide eave overhang and prominent dormer. Full- or partial-width front porch, often with attached arbor or pergola. Roof rafters usually exposed, embellished by straight brackets or knee braces. Prominent chimneys and porch piers of field stone, rubble, or rough-faced brick.

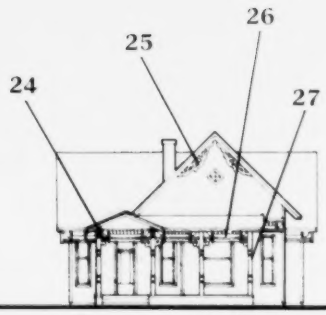
Gothic Revival
Evansville



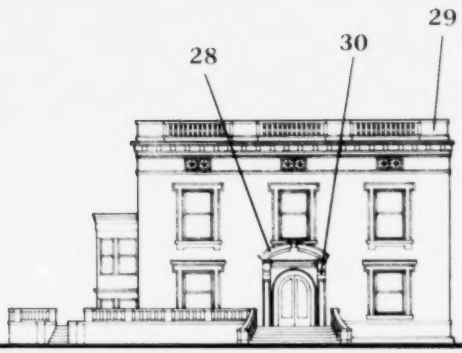
Second Empire
North Manchester



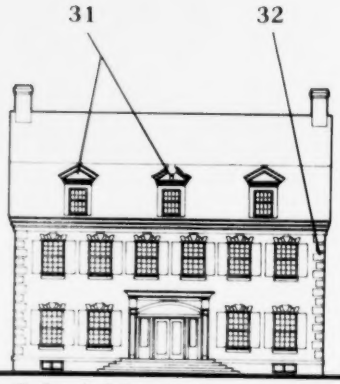
Romanesque Revival
Williamsport



Carpenter-Builder
Elizabethtown



Beaux-Arts Classicism
Indianapolis



Colonial Revival
Indianapolis

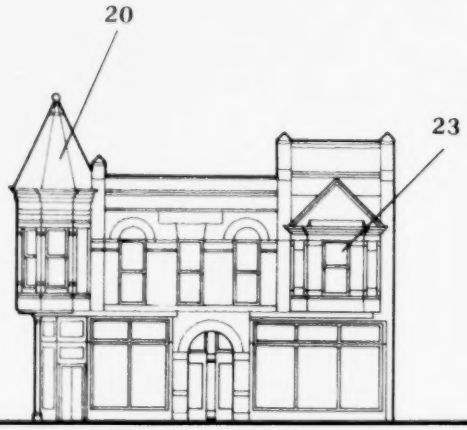
Nineteenth Century Functional (1880–1905)
Style used to produce modest, utilitarian commercial or industrial structures. Simple, pressed metal cornices, brackets, window hoods. Usually of brick construction, with modicum of decorative trim.

Chicago School (1890–1920)
First indigenous American architectural style, developed by Louis Sullivan and other Chicago architects. Boldly geometric commercial buildings with flat roofs and widely projecting eaves. Arched and/or linteled windows grouped in vertical bands. Surfaces — especially cornices, spandrels and doorways — often ornamented with stylized foliage in low-relief terra cotta.

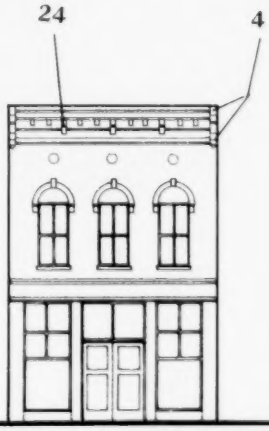
Art Deco (1920–1935)
Characterized by bold geometric form and stylized decoration. Low-relief ornamentation, in form of zig-zags, chevrons, and/or volutes, often executed in colored glazed bricks, terra cotta, mosaic tiles or metal panels. Casement or metal sash windows often arranged in vertical strips.

Elements

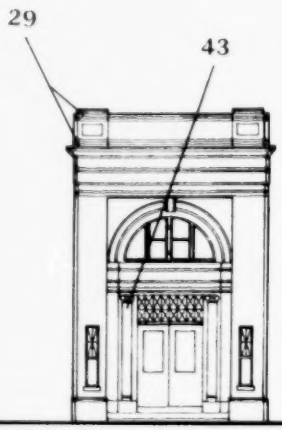
1. end chimney
2. multi-paned windows
3. fanlight window
4. cornice
5. transom
6. sidelights
7. Doric Order column
8. steeply-pitched roof
9. bargeboard
10. pointed-arched openings
11. hooded openings
12. tall, narrow round-arched windows
13. decorative brackets
14. segmental-arched window hoods
15. dormer
16. tower
17. mansard roof
18. short grouped columns
19. large, thick arches
20. turret
21. balcony
22. spindled porch
23. bay window
24. brackets
25. gingerbread trim
26. spindled porch frieze
27. turned posts
28. pediment
29. parapet
30. columns
31. pedimented dormers
32. quoins
33. half timbering
34. wide, overhanging eaves
35. hipped roof
36. horizontal bands of windows
37. knee braces
38. exposed rafter ends
39. porch piers
40. casement sash
41. Chicago window
42. pier
43. Ionic Order column



Queen Anne
Elkhart

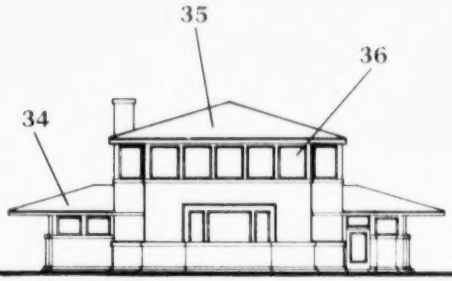


Nineteenth Century Functional
Jasper

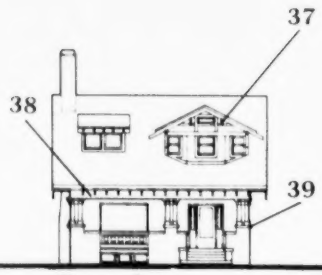


Beaux-Arts Classicism
Cannelton

Tudor Revival
Logansport



Prairie Style
South Bend



Bungalow
Indianapolis

Terms to Know

Architecture — "The art or practice of designing and building structures" (Webster's).

Landmark — A building, district, site or object that holds special historical, cultural, or architectural significance on a local, state, or national level. "Official" landmarks are structures which are listed in the National or State Registers of Historic Places, or which receive protection under local preservation ordinances.

Historic district — A geographically definable area which contains buildings, sites, or structures that are united by historical associations or by architectural design, setting, materials, or other visual attributes. Areas recognized as historic districts are generally listed in the National or State registers and/or receive protection under local preservation ordinances.

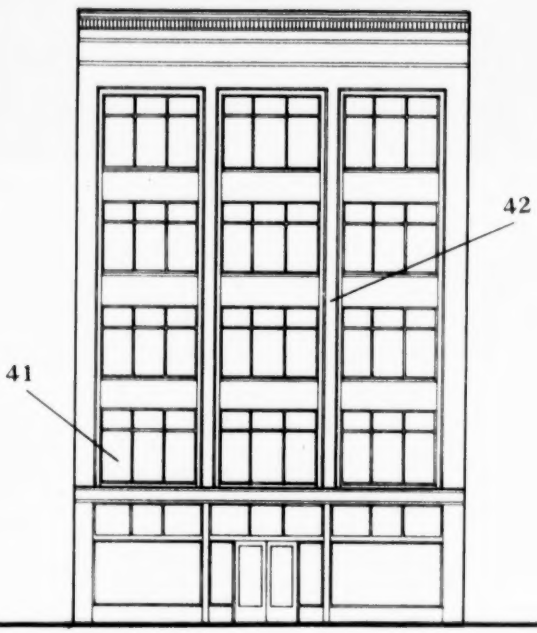
Streetscape — The visual character of a street as created by the combination of its form, paving materials, and street furniture with the design, materials, and relationships of the surrounding buildings.

Preservation — Saving an old building, site, or structure from demolition or deterioration and guaranteeing its future through restoration or rehabilitation and proper maintenance.

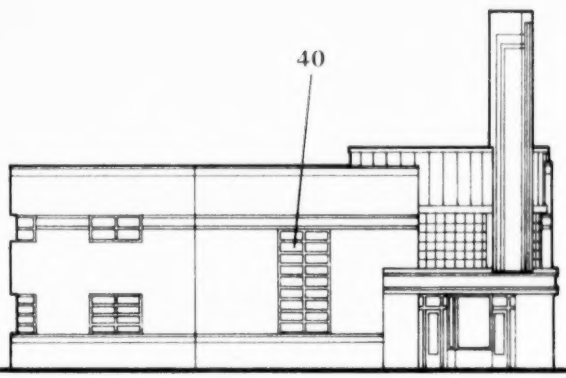
Restoration — "The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time . . ." (Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation).

Adaptive use — The conversion to a new use of a historic building which has outlived its original function (eg., the conversion of a school or factory to an apartment building).

National Register of Historic Places — The official list of the nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. To be eligible for listing, a building, site, structure, district or object must in general be at least 50 years old and considered of local state or national significance. In addition to the honor it confers, inclusion in the National Register protects a property from adverse effects of federally financed, licensed, or assisted projects. The Indiana State Register of Historic Sites and Structures operates in a similar fashion on the state level to recognize and protect properties of state and local significance. All Indiana properties listed in the National Register are also included in the State Register.



Chicago School
Indianapolis



Art Deco
Evansville

Jack Wells

For More Information

State Headquarters
3402 Boulevard Place, Indianapolis, IN 46208
Telephone: 317-926-2301

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, the only statewide Hoosier preservation organization, is dedicated to promoting — through advocacy, education and direct action — the preservation and restoration of Indiana's historic architecture as the best means of maintaining Hoosier heritage.

The size and scope of Historic Landmarks' services makes us one of the nation's most respected preservation groups. Our comprehensive services include professional consultation on historic architecture and preservation matters, technical advice on restoration, extensive publications and educational programs, architectural surveys, revolving loan funds and other financial programs, and an Indianapolis-based tour service.

Historic Landmarks' state headquarters houses the Info Center, the most complete preservation resource center in the state. This professionally-staffed research library contains books, reports, periodicals, vertical files, and slides on a diverse range of topics related to architecture and preservation. More than 25 audio-visual programs and films are available for loan from the Info Center.

Historic Landmarks, a nonprofit organization of 3,800 members, maintains headquarters in a restored landmark, the former Waiting Station of Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis. Staffed regional offices in Cambridge City, Indianapolis, Jeffersonville, South Bend and Greencastle extend Historic Landmarks' advisory services and programs throughout the state.

In addition to our other activities, Historic Landmarks owns historic properties and operates three house museums for purposes of education and demonstration: Morris-Butler House and Kemper House in Indianapolis, and the Huddleston Farmhouse Inn Museum in Cambridge City.

Regional Offices

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Helpful Publications*

Architectural Education Resource Guide
A guide to national, state and local sources which are helpful in planning architecture and historic preservation curriculum units.

Hoosier Landmarks
An illustrated booklet which lists all Indiana properties included in the National Register of Historic Places. Published annually.

Locating Hoosier Landmarks
A brochure which describes the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory program.

The National Register of Historic Places in Indiana: Summary of criteria and procedures
A brochure which outlines the National Register program and explains the nomination process.

Preservation Bulletin: Renovation of Historic Buildings, A Checklist
A brochure which briefly describes proper and improper approaches to historic building renovation.

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To obtain information on nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Sites and Structures, write or call:

Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
202 North Alabama Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204
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